

# A Romance to Leeward

BY ARTHUR COLTON

**M**R. BEVERLY DYCE was a large, stout, elderly man with a smooth, expansive face, a bulging forehead, and a domed head singularly bald. He leaned forward and looked over the top of his spectacles. The effect of his thoughtful manner and intellectual appearance was such that we felt that in some way the story was of a grave, reflective nature, significant, bearing on human life with example and lesson. "A personal experience," he said, "illustrating the vicissitudes of our affairs, the inherent weaknesses of our fallen nature."

## I

On the 13th of September, 1878, I embarked on a sailing-vessel intending to visit the coast of South America and inform myself by direct observation of the characteristics of a tropical climate. There were on board but two other passengers, Mrs. McKenzie, a widow lady of great attractions, of intelligence, and a certain graceful solidity of proportion, going to visit relatives in Trinidad; and Professor Simpson, a distinguished scientist, whose purpose was to collect small cuttle-fish and preserve them in alcohol. Professor Simpson was a man whose presence I should ordinarily have welcomed for the educational value of his company, for his mind was well stored and active, though in person he was small, his manner somewhat categorical, and his countenance thin and dry. But in this instance I found my desire for information dampened by reason of the attractiveness of Mrs. McKenzie. For, neither of us being possessed of a family, we were, in fact, before reaching the harbor of Ponce, in Porto Rico, both deeply engaged in pursuing her affections. The captain of the vessel was also involved in the same pursuit.

The captain was—I think I am justified in so describing him—an irascible

man. On the third day of our delay at Ponce, and about noon, upon returning to the ship from the town with the intention of setting sail, he there found, besides the three passengers, only one sailor and the cabin-boy. He displayed remarkable excitement. I have reason to believe his language was offensive both to Mrs. McKenzie and Professor Simpson. He ordered the sailor and cabin-boy to go in his boat, being the only boat not ashore, and summon the delinquent crew, but his anger was such that at the last moment he descended to the boat himself and went with them. In so leaving the ship unprotected, it is my opinion he acted contrary to marine rules.

It appears that he found difficulty in collecting the seamen, many of them being so intoxicated as to be objectionable. A considerable time elapsed, toward the end of which time Professor Simpson and myself became greatly interested in a singular cloud, appearing out of a sky hitherto cloudless, in the northwest, and growing with extreme rapidity. Professor Simpson even took notes of the phenomenon as it developed, in his note-book. He described it as "bulbous in the upper portion and attenuated below, resembling in some degree a balloon," and classed it with those atmospheric conditions called "tornadoes." He expressed the opinion that we were ourselves in some personal danger. Mrs. McKenzie then became alarmed and retired to the cabin, and Professor Simpson followed to calm her excitement. I did not think it right to leave that advantage entirely with him.

But calming the alarm of Mrs. McKenzie was so absorbing an activity that we hardly noticed the increasing tumult until the tornado was in fact immediately upon us, the uproar drowning our voices. There occurred then a sudden jerk of the ship which cast us to the floor, Mrs. McKenzie upon Professor

Simpson in such a way as to quite obscure him, with the exception of his legs. I avoided falling upon Mrs. McKenzie, and rising, looked through a port-hole, but could see nothing except spray and splashing water, nor infer anything as to our situation, further than that the ship appeared to be engaged in an extraordinary performance, consisting of leaping and falling, together with a certain circular motion. Mrs. McKenzie's alarm was so great that she continued the obscuration of Professor Simpson, who kicked in a vague though violent manner, but happily without injury to Mrs. McKenzie, so that it seemed to me perhaps wiser to leave her to regain composure in her own way.

At the end of some minutes, the tumult appearing to subside to merely a strong wind with heavy seas, I ventured to open the door and ascend upon the deck. What was my distress to discover that the ship had broken loose from her anchor and appeared to be moving rapidly in a side-long position to the wind. The mist was too thick to see far in any direction. I could only infer, from the point from which the tornado had come, that we had been driven out of the harbor and were now moving presumably southeast on the open sea. Several broken spars hung from the rigging, entangled with ropes, and beat against the masts. But the washing of the waves across the deck made it impracticable to stay there, and I returned to the cabin. I mentioned my inferences.

"Mr. Dyce!" exclaimed Mrs. McKenzie. "This is an impossible situation."

"But, my dear Mrs. McKenzie, consider!" said Professor Simpson, rising from the floor. "Surely a situation that is *in esse*—that is to say, in actual existence—cannot be described as 'impossible.' It is, nevertheless, as you mean to imply, most distressing."

"But what shall we do?"

Professor Simpson reflected, and said it would need examination. I ventured to suggest that we should in the mean time remain where we were. He objected, with that remarkable faculty he possessed for distinctions, that, being in motion *with* the ship, it was not in our power, but as regards our relations *to* the ship, I was perhaps right. Mrs. McKen-

zie was interested in this distinction, and became more calm.

We composed ourselves, therefore, and waited. Occasionally looking out of the port-holes, we perceived the mist gradually turning to rain. Gradually, too, the violence of the waves subsided. The wind blew more moderately, and so continued through the afternoon. Toward nightfall Professor Simpson and myself, properly protected, went forward on deck and explored the store-room and galley, and with the results Mrs. McKenzie prepared an excellent meal. She retired early to rest; Professor Simpson agreed to watch with me alternately, and retired as well. I lay upon the cabin sofa. The rain continued to fall heavily, the ship to lift and sink. I listened to the creaking of the rigging, the murmur of the rain, the monotonous roll and splash of the slow waves against the sides.

Considering the multitude of dangers that surround us wherever we go, and the probability of our attracting attention in such frequented waters, it did not appear that our situation was peculiarly perilous, though unusual. Moreover, the mind should be trained to see the normal in the apparently abnormal, the familiar law manifested in the seeming exception. Thus the sea covers two-thirds of the earth, and is an eventful element; events upon it seem to us more unusual because of our greater familiarity with events upon land; but the philosophic mind, by penetrating all such illusions, is everywhere at home. How charming, too, to be placed a watchful sentinel over the slumbers of Mrs. McKenzie! Composing my mind with these reflections, I fell asleep, and so spared Professor Simpson the necessity of taking the watch in his turn, not without gratifications, indeed, that I could deprive him of that credit in the eyes of Mrs. McKenzie.

When I awoke, the sun was shining in at the port-holes, the ship, as regards the waves, quite motionless, and everything silent. I arose and went on deck.

Judge of my surprise on perceiving myself close to a wooded shore. The ship lay hardly a hundred feet from it, apparently checked by the keel, and now, with the subsidence of the tide, inclining somewhat toward the land. We were on the southern side of a bay of semi-

circular shape, evidently deep, and opening toward the east, from which direction such slight breeze as there was now appeared to come. It was still early morning. The ripples flowed gently among the stones beneath lofty flowering banks. Bright-colored birds flitted between the tall stems of palm-trees that seemed almost to overhang the ship.

"How delightful," I reflected, "to dwell here, to pass my life in a spot so halcyon, so sequestered, in the sole company of Mrs. McKenzie! These embowered shades, these birds so beautifully adorned, how suitable, how ideal!"

Though in the midst of these enamored thoughts, I was happy to be interrupted by the appearance on deck, with exclamations, of Mrs. McKenzie—unfortunately followed shortly after by Professor Simpson.

"Where is this, Mr. Dyce?" she asked.

I was mortified to be at a loss, and to see her appeal to him.

"Tentatively," he said, "I should conjecture it was an outlying island somewhat to the eastward of the West Indies."

"But does any one live on it?"

"That Mr. Dyce and myself will take it upon us to discover."

"Well, I think it is a very nice island, anyway."

I ventured to suggest that in order to be complete it lacked Mrs. McKenzie actually upon it. Professor Simpson looked annoyed.

"But how can I get on it?" cried Mrs. McKenzie. "How can any of us get on it?"

"Precisely," said Professor Simpson. "You isolate the problem successfully. I would suggest, perhaps, a bridge."

"Of what?"

"Of—a—palm-trees, felled"—he kindled with his ideas—"in such a manner as to fall forward upon the ship, thus by fastening to form a secure connection with the shore."

"Oh," Mrs. McKenzie objected, "but you can't chop them from here."

"True. That is a difficulty."

I said it should be my part to resolve it. As Mrs. McKenzie had isolated the problem, and Professor Simpson suggested a line of endeavor, it should fall to me to furnish a practical method. Mrs. McKenzie applauded, and Professor

Simpson complimented, I trust not ironically, my courageous attitude.

The method was simple. All three having breakfasted, I laid out the plan and proceeded with resolution. I cut loose a broken and dangling spar, and the incline of the deck bringing the water-line practically near, pushed the spar into the water, drew it close by means of a rope, and lowered myself carefully, with caution to arrive at the middle of the spar and thus to bestride it. Professor Simpson handed me an axe. Sunk somewhat beyond the waist-line, with the aid of a pole formerly used to support a flag at the stern of the ship, I then propelled myself toward the bank.

What sense of peril I had! What images of myself overturned, sinking, struggling, helplessly drowned, rising at length by reason of expanding gases, only to float pendulous—what forecasts of distress I suffered, I will not describe. Not without immediate contact with the uncertain element do we become aware of the dangers of the deep. But what will not the presence of the feminine inspire the male to attempt in order to display in her eyes his activity and contempt of danger? I reached the shore without accident, and ascended the bank with great difficulty, encouraged by the voice of Mrs. McKenzie. After some repose and examination I selected a cluster of four tall though slender trees leaning in the direction of the ship's prow. Mrs. McKenzie and Professor Simpson retired to the other end. Be it sufficient to say that each tree fell and remained in place, bridging the water, with one exception, which, falling too far to the right, missed the prow and floated uselessly. Professor Simpson then with another axe skilfully denuded the trees of their tops, and, assisted by Mrs. McKenzie, pushed the ends together and fastened them. He then tied one end of a strong rope to a point about the middle of the ship, and came ashore with the other end, crossing the tremulous bridge with noticeable calmness. The rope was attached securely to a tree.

We now paused and surveyed the result. There remained the difficulty of encouraging and assisting Mrs. McKenzie to attempt the passage. What was our surprise to see that admirable woman

ascend the rail of the ship, put forward a small and neatly shod foot, and walk across that fragile support and adventurous distance with confidence, I may say, with enlivening gayety!

It remained to explore the island and discover if it were inhabited or neighboring to other islands. At Mrs. McKenzie's request were conveyed from the ship for her use a hammock and several cushions, and the hammock suspended. Professor Simpson and myself then set out, leaving Mrs. McKenzie in excellent spirits, at the time endeavoring to establish relations with a green and white parrot upon the trunk of an adjacent palm-tree. We soon lost sight of her.

## II

I will not attempt to detail our explorations. They were laborious and fruitless. We neither enjoyed our tour nor were communicative with each other. The island was perhaps some three miles around. No other land was in sight, doubtless rather because of low altitude than distance. Neither were there any inhabitants, though several slight huts at one point showed occasional or former occupancy.

Returning, we approached at length the western and northern side of the bay, and perceived the ship undisturbed. We stood a moment in silence. The wind was rising again with some severity, but now came from the southeast, so that the ship was protected, though upon that shore on which we stood the waves rolled tumultuously. Professor Simpson broke the silence in the following singular manner. He planted himself before me with his hands on his hips, frowning.

I have frequently observed that there is something in the nature of a frown requiring it, for efficiency, to be directed downward rather than upward. Whether the law of gravitation acts against it were perhaps too curious a query, but I believe it to be true that this sign of reprobation should never, if avoidable, be directed upward, as Professor Simpson's inferior size compelled him to do.

"It is not my habit," he began, "Mr. Dyce, to brook impertinent opposition or light-minded interference. In, therefore, announcing that it is my intention to invite Mrs. McKenzie to the alliance of

marriage, I conceive that no more should need to be said. I wish to be relieved of this undignified rivalry and to avail myself of this peculiar situation to fulfil my purpose in peace. I demand that your too noticeable attentions shall cease. Your attitude toward Mrs. McKenzie is offensive to me. I repeat, sir, it must cease."

In reply to these extraordinary words I thought it excusable, in the absence of Mrs. McKenzie, to give vent to my indignation. "Your assumption, sir," I said, "amazes me. *You* 'demand'! *You* attempt to intimidate *me*! *You* assume this absurdly imperative manner! Are you blinded with self-conceit? 'Cease'! On the contrary, I shall immediately approach Mrs. McKenzie on the same subject."

"I object to your giving Mrs. McKenzie that annoyance. Her preference for me is perfectly plain."

"I object to your casting that slur on Mrs. McKenzie's judgment. You are without personal attractions."

"You are too fat."

"You are a dried molecule, a contemptible precisian."

"Sir!"

Professor Simpson clinched his fists.

"Do you wish," I said, impressively, "to provoke me to physical encounter? I warn you."

He controlled himself, drew a long breath, and then, to my surprise, suddenly laid himself flat upon the ground, extending his arms and legs and closing his eyes. I observed him with astonishment.

"I was somewhat heated," he murmured. "To allay any mental strain, such as vexation or anger, extend the body, relax the muscles, and endeavor to abstract the mind from surroundings. The effect is invariable. Let me recommend it to you."

"There," he said, after a moment, getting to his feet, "I am quite calm."

But I did not imitate him. Lying down and rising again was with me a more serious and laborious matter.

"Clearly," he continued, "we must submit it to Mrs. McKenzie. I suggest, then, that we ask of her a half-hour's interview each, to be given successively. Subsequently she will announce her de-

cision, and thus we will conclude our dispute."

To this I agreed, and we proceeded more amicably along the bay toward the ship.

Mrs. McKenzie was not where we left her, but on the ship, looking out for our return. In spite of the protection of the trees, the force of the wind against the masts and rigging was such as to put a severe strain upon the attaching rope, so that it was stretched taut—such, I believe, is the marine phrase.

"In half an hour, then," said Professor Simpson, "you will be at liberty to interrupt me," and he hastened across the bridge. His greater quickness of mind and alacrity of motion, together with his natural instinct for assumption, here gave him the advantage, for we had neglected to discuss the subject of precedence. I raised my voice, however, and stated to Mrs. McKenzie my wish for an interview subsequent to that of Professor Simpson; then retired and walked to and fro among the trees. I will not deny my uneasiness. Though admittedly a weakness, it was but natural.

I was punctilious on the point of honor. I allowed the full time, and returned, perceiving with relief, rather with exultation, Professor Simpson still engaged in evident argument, clearly not yet conclusive, with Mrs. McKenzie. They stood by the rail near to the rope that attached the ship to the shore. I said:

"Professor Simpson, your time has elapsed. I am about to come on board."

He raised his hands in deprecation. He was excited. He said:

"I have not concluded. Mrs. McKenzie, a few moments more! No, no! I refuse to be interrupted."

Mrs. McKenzie made no sign. I proceeded toward the bridge. He ran along the deck.

"It is critical, sir, critical!"

His excitement became intense. He wrung his hands. Suddenly he disappeared. Judge of my horror to see him re-appear, holding aloft an axe, to see him rush to the rope, and with vehement descending blow sever it, recklessly, treacherously.

The ship gave way to the pressure. It moved, dragging the end of the bridge

upon which my foot already rested, and all but precipitating me into the water—such might have been the result of his thoughtlessness. It heaved over on its keel, so changing the incline of the deck as to upset Mrs. McKenzie against Professor Simpson, and stagger both backward until checked by the mast, against which they remained leaning obliquely, she clasped fast in his arms. The keel slipped from its grounded position. The ship regained its level and began drifting away. Such *were* the immediate results of Professor Simpson's strange, indefensible action.

My anger and distress were great. I shouted words of obloquy, of opprobrium, I know not what. Nor was the realization of the force with which, as I had observed, Mrs. McKenzie's elbow must have been driven into Professor Simpson's stomach, not conditioned for such assault, and the weight with which her nobly proportioned shoulder must have been oppressing his chest—nor were these, I say, though productive of satisfaction in calmer moments, sufficient then to allay the agony of seeing Professor Simpson's arms continued about Mrs. McKenzie's seductive waist without any remonstrance on her part, apparently with her complete acquiescence. To thus set himself and Mrs. McKenzie once more at the mercy of the sea, to barbarously abandon me on that uninhabited island, to cling thus to Mrs. McKenzie as if triumphing in violated honor, insulting my feelings, my betrayed desolation—was ever conduct so irrational, so ill-regulated, so devoid of conscience and rectitude?

I picked up the axe formerly used to fell the palm-trees. I ran along the bank, although the act of running was unsuited to my physique, and I was compelled to rest and regain breath at frequent intervals. But I soon perceived that the ship was being driven not in the direction of the open sea, but across the bay, toward the point where Professor Simpson and myself had lately stood in altercation.

When I reached that point the prow had already run aground, and the stern had swung about, dragging the attached tree trunks, formerly the bridge, after it: so that the ship lay in a position similar to its former one—that is, par-



elled with the shore, but at a greater distance.

But on coming opposite with intentions of further reproach, if possible of taking some peremptory action upon Professor Simpson, my feelings were, I may say, at once soothed and further lacerated by what I saw. For the ship now lay on what is technically called a windward shore, the waves being of considerable height and force, and the ship, balanced, so to speak, on its keel, swayed with swift and wide oscillation, descending now on this side in my direction, and now on that away from me, through an arc, as I then estimated it, of some forty-five degrees. The effect of this upon Mrs. McKenzie and Professor Simpson was what I just referred to as creating in me mingled emotions. For, the deck now inclining toward me, I beheld Mrs. McKenzie lose hold of the opposite rail and begin rolling rapidly down the incline, and Professor Simpson, in endeavoring chivalrously to assist her, himself projected forward and overturned, and both, involved in a common disaster and in the environment of Mrs. McKenzie's clothing, descending, rolling confusedly the breadth of the deck, until checked and concealed by the rail. The backward oscillation of the ship hid the further developments, but the shrieks of Mrs. McKenzie penetrated even the roar of the tempestuous waves. "Soothed," I say, by this condign punishment of Professor Simpson's ill-advised and reckless conduct and of Mrs. McKenzie's inexplicable countenance of such conduct; "lacerated," because the manly heart cannot calmly endure the sight of feminine distress, especially of one with whom it has, or has had, hopes of tender and intimate ties.

Upon the returning descent they both appeared above the rail, Mrs. McKenzie crying: "Save me! Save me!" and Professor Simpson: "Can you not assist? I entreat! I adjure! Do not—"

But the obdurate upheaval here interrupted him, and they were next disclosed at the opposite rail, having made the passage in a manner presumably similar to that previous. This could be no longer endured. Some immediate action must be taken.

The three slender trunks of the bridge

still attached to the stern had in the mean while been so driven about that those ends of them which are denominated "butts" now appeared to have come in contact with the submerged shore, where they remained, though dragged to and fro by the motion of the ship. The approach to these ends was beset and rendered hazardous by the rushing waves; nevertheless, animated and resolved, I attempted it, and found no great difficulty in resisting the surf. The main difficulty lay in drawing two of them together, in ascending their incline beyond the reach of the surf, and in maintaining that uneasy position when once gained, because the oscillation of the ship caused them so to leap, halt, and rebound as to resemble the kicking of a restive horse or a series of railroad collisions. Yet I persevered, and at last, grasping the two logs with hands and knees, I looked up and saw Mrs. McKenzie and Professor Simpson clinging to the shattered rail above and regarding me.

"Mrs. McKenzie," I cried, "I beg you to take courage. Believe me, there is no other way. You must descend. Here I will meet you."

"I can't walk that!" she cried back. "It doesn't keep still!"

"Walk it!" I roared, shrieked in desperation. "Creep it, madam! Shin it! Roll down it! Come any way and don't fall off."

At this point Mrs. McKenzie laughed! Admirable woman indeed, for self-possession, for determined spirit, for unexpected agility. She mounted and descended toward me, creeping, sliding, clinging, embracing powerfully that eccentric and careering viaduct. I could not but admire, even at that moment, her captivating dignity.

To fall upon Professor Simpson, to remain seated upon, in mental distress obscuring, eclipsing a scientific luminary, and yet to observe decorum; to roll with Professor Simpson in unity and distraction, in the same rotatory enwrapment of voluminous clothing, and yet excite in the observer only feelings of sympathetic chivalry; to be wobbled, danced, dandled, and jerked about in the air on two insane and flimsy poles, and yet maintain an air of distinction—these were Mrs. McKenzie's achievements.

She approached, I retreated. Whether it were Providence or the determination of my mind which so added to my strength as to meet the crisis, I know not. I clasped her in my arms, hardly conscious of the weight inevitable from her excellent but expansive and solid proportions, rushed, waded, forced my way to dry land, and had the satisfaction to deposit her in a less damp condition than would have been expected. I then stretched myself out in breathless exhaustion, and did not perceive, perhaps was indifferent to, what happened to Professor Simpson, until I was aware of him cast up by an ebullient wave and sprawling on the shore. He sprang to his feet.

"A miraculous escape! I would not have believed myself so agile."

Mrs. McKenzie surveyed us both and began to laugh.

"I am delighted," he said, shaking himself, "my dear—a—Susanna, to see you in such composure."

I arose, with difficulty, yet with that dignity which the sense of injured worth bestows.

"Am I to understand, sir, that you have profited from your treachery, your violation of honor?"

He looked disturbed.

"Mrs. McKenzie has consented to accomplish my happiness; nevertheless, I am not without—"

I interrupted and turned to Mrs. McKenzie.

"And this behavior has met with your approval?"

"It seems so," she said, smiling.

"You were aware of the agreement between us?"

"That you were to propose to me next? Of course: you should have taken care to be first."

"That you were to reserve your decision?"

"Did I agree to that?" She laughed, and continued: "But perhaps he is willing to start over again. Only I shall warn him now that your proofs of gallantry are more recent than his."

Professor Simpson started.

"Mrs. McKenzie speaks in jest. It would be an unprecedented procedure. Most impossible."

I bowed, took from my pocket my

aluminium match-safe, and extracted several matches.

"How you are to reconcile to morality, sir, this reward of victorious evil, I will not inquire. Neither will I be so hypocritical as to congratulate you. I merely suggest that you take this match-safe and kindle a fire for Mrs. McKenzie's and your own comfort, and that until our rescuers arrive, as without doubt they will, my privacy be so far as possible respected."

So saying, I picked up an axe, turned, strode away, and was presently concealed from their view.

The afternoon was now late. I kindled a fire with which to dry my garments, felled a banana-tree, and satisfied my appetite with the fruit, leaving to the others, if they chose, to enjoy the food previously brought ashore. This was evidently their purpose, for I soon saw them walking along the other side of the bay. I seated myself by the fire and gave way to contemplation.

### III

Melancholy, when accompanied by a sense of injustice and superior desert, is not without its pleasures and consolations, and though depressed by the loss of Mrs. McKenzie, I trusted to have planted a poisoned arrow in the conscience of Professor Simpson, to have set him an ethical problem insoluble and therefore irritating to his exact mind. I could not but fancy that a lady of Mrs. McKenzie's determined spirit, who had already experienced how easily she could enfix and hold down Professor Simpson by superimposing herself physically upon him, would remember that fact and erect her authority, perhaps even repeat the experiment as required. After all, marriage would without doubt disturb my pursuits, the lines of my many investigations. "*Aequam memento*," I reflected, "*rebus in arduis*." The true philosopher was one disciplined to accept all things. I was pleased with my restored equanimity, as a proof of a vigorous and rational mind. I even went so far as to express my utter indifference by whistling. So the time passed away, and it was perhaps six o'clock. I was suddenly surprised by the appearance before me of Professor Simpson, alone.

"Professor Simpson," I said, "you intrude."

He did not answer, but seated himself on the fallen trunk of the banana-tree.

"I am compelled to do so," he said at last, solemnly. "Mrs. McKenzie objects to the present arrangement by reason of the approaching night and on the score of propriety. She also declines to be left alone. She demands the return of Mr. Dyce."

"Although I appreciate Mrs. McKenzie's feelings," I said, "I discern a want of consideration for mine."

"I have stated Mrs. McKenzie's attitude without commenting upon it," he went on. "As regards my own, there is much more to be said. I cannot conceal from myself that the terms you have applied to my late conduct would, if properly qualified and defined, in the main be just. I am, further, upon Mrs. McKenzie's own declaration, forced to believe that the success of my suit was entirely due to that action which my conscience compels me to deplore. She was attracted to me by that very deviation from rectitude into which I was tempted and fell. Mrs. McKenzie states that she was prepared to decline my proposal when my action revealed to her my character, as she says, in a new light. Not to my position in the scientific world, to my well-earned repute, not to my worthier qualities of mind and heart, not to her conviction of these claims, must her capitulation be attributed. You will understand my distress at this admission, made so lightly by Mrs. McKenzie. I fear to infer, and yet cannot but infer, a want of seriousness, even perhaps,—must I say so?—a looseness of conscience on the part of Mrs. McKenzie. I showed to her my distress, I even intimated my fear; I begged her to allay it, to consider the point more carefully. To my surprise, she became angry. She asked if I repented what I had done. I endeavored to define my position. She impulsively interrupted and declared herself released from any tie with me. I endeavored to reason upon this line, that our agreement could not be so abrogated. She prevented me. She reiterated. She refused to discuss. She brought forward instead the impropriety of our situation, and commanded me to

go and insist on the return of Mr. Dyce. Such has been my recent, my painful conversation with Mrs. McKenzie, concluding with the command which has caused this intrusion upon you."

He was silent. I arose.

"Do not apologize," I said with gayety. "Your repentance has destroyed my resentment. Mrs. McKenzie's release has removed the cause of my retirement. Say no more."

"But I have not admitted her release," he objected. Yet he followed after in a depressed manner.

Upon approaching the spot we saw Mrs. McKenzie reclining in the hammock. She rose and turned, but not to meet us. On the contrary, she cried out, and running to the bank, stood upon it waving her handkerchief vehemently. Immediately we perceived the cause—a small steam-vessel was entering the bay. It was the irascible captain looking for his ship, bringing, indeed, with him the entire delinquent crew.

#### IV

In the excitement of watching the vessel rescued and towed into deeper water, and of the conveyance of ourselves once more on board, I did not think it suitable to approach Mrs. McKenzie on the subject I had at heart. I waited until we were fully and peacefully upon our way to Porto Rico. The moon arose, the night was placid, poetic, brilliant with a multitude of stars. With resolution I now went in search of Mrs. McKenzie. I found Professor Simpson forward looking abstractedly at the moon, and inquired of him.

"I am not informed," he said, calmly. "On further consideration of Mrs. McKenzie's late conduct I have decided to yield to her request, and have signified to her my decision."

He paused a moment, and then continued: "I was but now engaged in formulating an interesting hypothesis in regard to certain minor errors in the theory of tides, which I should be glad to submit to your criticism. I think it may be demonstrated."

I left him and walked toward the after part of the deck. I felt contented, confident, serene.

"What balm," I said to myself, "in



the proper gratification of natural longings! The heavens smile on the victorious wooer, graciously recognizing the perfecting of creation in the union of the masculine and the feminine."

I approached the stern of the ship. I perceived Mrs. McKenzie leaning upon the rail, and closely approximate to her the irascible captain. I accosted her and asked a half-hour's interview. She turned. She disclosed, she showed no embarrassment in disclosing, both her hands imprisoned and constrained by the captain's. She did not attempt to withdraw them. She said, "You're too late once more."

"What!" shouted the captain, angrily, dropping her hands. "Do you mean to say, I—"

"No, I don't," she interrupted. "Nothing of the kind. No one would

have any chance against you, for no one has such a delightful temper. It's irresistible."

He laughed uproariously, and by a swift manœuvre recaptured her hands, clearly intending yet more inclusive endearments, which Mrs. McKenzie seemed not resolutely inclined to avoid.

I withdrew in silence. My disapproval might be inferred, but I would not reproach.

"Woman," I reflected, "is an insoluble element; there is no more to be said."

So reflecting, I rejoined Professor Simpson, who began,

"The hypothesis to which I referred is as follows—"

I have ever been at a loss to express my admiration for Professor Simpson's creative insight and sagacious acumen.

## After

BY S. E. KISER

ONE who was rich picked out a spot  
 High on a noble hill, and there  
 He built himself a costly tomb,  
 That all the people might know where  
 He rested when his work was done.  
 The marble glistened in the sun;  
 The white shaft towered in the air.

A toiler where the crowds were great  
 Had love of men big in his heart;  
 He sang to make the sighing glad,  
 And preached for peace with all his art.  
 His song died on his lips one day.  
 They laid the ill-clad form away,  
 From all the costly tombs apart.

Broad paths are beaten to a spot  
 Watched now with loving, jealous care;  
 And rich and poor and great and small  
 Fare far to stand uncovered there.  
 High on the hill, seen from below,  
 A rich tomb stands, but few men go  
 To see what name the shaft may bear.